

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600.

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

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To whom it may concern,

Secretary:

I'm one of the many fathers in which these issues affects and am very pleased to see that there is finally going to be something done about it, We can only hope that it is done fairly.

My partner and I separated when our son was only 18 months old, after many months of arguing and being denied access to my son we finally came to a verbal agreement, about child support and access. Which worked well for many years. We both finally meet our current spouse's some 4 and a half years later, Then all of a sudden I was denied access to my son and put through the child support agency for payments of child support that I had already paid, but as these payments we all cash and paid directly to my sons mother I had no proof therefore had to pay them all over again. My new partner had decided to relocate to our current town as to not upset the access arrangements that had been in place for many years only to get here and my son's mother had decided to relocate over 2000 klms away. It then took me over 14 months of arguing through solicitors and thousands of dollars to be able to see my son, I also had to agree to pay the airfares for my son to fly up here to see me. This inquiry may be too late to help me but there are still thousands of separated fathers out there in the same position that if granted 50/50 access at the time of separation could save themselves the cost and time of being apart from their child/ren.

Now the child support formula where to begin.

This is a very touchy subject in our home, as my wife is currently pregnant with our first child and has been informed that the child she is carrying is worth approx. \$ 36.00 And my son is worth approx. \$140.00. This is calculated on what I earn't this financial year. I also agree that this is an awful lot of money for one child and would like to know why I carry the full financial burden for my son as I can not see his mother having to contribute financially in anyway .She also puts the financial burden to pay for his clothing, medical, and additional expenses for the time that I have him, As I have already paid for these items in my weekly child support I do not see why I should then have to face the financial burden to supply these items again, I cannot claim these items through any forms from the child support agency, I just have to wear the extra cost.

I can however claim the airfares that I pay for as long as they add up to more than 5% of my child support income, but in applying for this special circumstance I find out that I then have to provide not only to the child support agency but also to my son's mother a detailed budget including proof of all my bills, I don't believe that she is entitled to that information, what I pay for my home loan, personal loan, car and day to day living expenses is my own business not anybody else's especially hers.

My wife and I have been doing overtime for the last 8/9 months to pay off some bills so that when our child is born and my wife gives up work to raise our child we would be able to cope financially, but as we have done this I find myself in a worse position than before as now not only have we lost my wife's income I will also be incurring an arrears bill and be paying more child support next financial year. That I will not be able to afford to pay, but the child support agency believes that I should just continue to do the overtime so that I can afford to pay the extra, I was hoping to cut down on the time I spent at work so I could enjoy spending time with my wife and child.

Other factors which I think need to be looked at where the child support formula is concerned are:

Income threshold – Why is the mother of my son able to earn three times as much as me when she has no one else to support, her husband supports her, I on the other hand have my wife and our child to support but can only claim \$20000.00 a year to support three people and she can claim \$33000.00 It does not seem that it was worked out fairly.

Taxation – I pay the tax on the child support income she collects and yet I cannot claim the tax benefit for my son.

Justification – I seem to have to justify why I want any thing from the child support agency and the mother of my son, But she takes her money every month and I have no say in what it is used for if we were talking about a small amount of money I would assume it was being used for food, clothing etc. But as I pay such a large sum of money I believe I should have a say in what the money is used for.

Overtime- Overtime worked should not be included in your yearly income as you do this to help make your life a little better, but as it stands now the more you make the more you pay next year, it's just a vicious circle.

The child support motto is “ Helping parents manage their responsibilities “ The only thing it seems to manage is to cause more frustration between all parties involved. I believe that I should bear some financial responsibility but I do not believe that I should bear all of it, and the current system has no regard for my financial situation. If this inquiry was to get some or all of the parents to be able to communicate where their child/ren's upbringing was concerned that to me would be in the best interest of the child.

Your's Sincerely

